

New Booking Procedures
Franklin R. Marino, Trustee
Central City Precinct

We realize that everyone is frustrated with the new booking procedure as it seems to go backwards and adds a couple of extra steps to the process. As a member of the current Jail Committee, I can tell you there is a method to the madness. Our voices were finally heard this summer when the Phoenix Police Department finally decided to address the current booking process after years of complaints from the rank and file who actually arrest and book prisoners and bickering and denial by management who refused to address the problem.

I'm sure that most Patrol Officers and Detectives who are the end users of the system could care less about the intricacies of the system itself, but they need to realize how the system works and how important their part in the process is in getting to the end result. If you saw the process charts, you might have a better understanding that there is more to it than just filling out booking paperwork and releasing the prisoner to the custody of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

During the week of August 24th, 2009, all of the entities involved in the booking process, including representatives from Patrol, Jail Detail, R&I, Docket Desk, City Prosecutor's Office, City Court personnel including Judges, and MCSO sat down for a week and came up with solutions to reduce and eliminate these problems.

We need to photograph and fingerprint arrestees to establish and add to the individual's criminal history. MCSO fingerprints and photographs our prisoners, but many times their information isn't verified or gets to where it needs to go because of staffing issues and timelines. There are approximately 300 inmates scheduled to be released from DOC custody who have been incarcerated for violent offenses including sex crimes, who will officially have no criminal record, because they were never fingerprinted by the agencies who initiated the original charges. Closer to home, there are numerous Phoenix warrants where the offender can't be identified because they were never fingerprinted. This largely applies to cite and release situations, for criminal and criminal traffic offenses.

By fingerprinting our arrestees prior to booking, it allows a check of PACE, ACIC, and NCIC to verify if they have outstanding warrants, including those under different names, or variations names. Those warrant charges or "holds" for other agencies can be added to the original booking, instead of having our Officers go to the jail to do a "Page Two" arrest, for Phoenix warrants, which is time consuming and takes needed units off the street as well as makes extra work for R&I. Under most circumstances, the information should come back before you are done with the prebooking paperwork. On the positive side, more than 65% of arrests were conducted using the preferred procedures, which reduces the amount of work our already short staffed R&I personnel have to do in resolving errors, including discovery of additional warrants and "Page Two" bookings.

Because of the way the City and Department have chosen to do business over the years, this would not be an issue if we had our own booking facility. Now that it has finally come down to dollars and cents (We paid MCSO sixteen point nine million dollars last year to house misdemeanor prisoners, many who were released within hours of booking!) ultimately, we are migrating to a true “Central Booking Process.” The facility will be housed in the basement of our City Court Building, located at 300 West Washington Street, which will be staffed by civilian, yes, **CIVILIAN detention staff**, who will accept your prisoner after you fill out basic biographical information, arrest information, charges, and a form IV. This detail will then take your prisoner and complete the rest of the booking process, including transportation to the 4th Avenue Jail if there are felony charges, or if they must be held for more than 24 hours after initial appearance court.

This will be a major change in how we do business and staff in R&I as well as the City Court and Prosecutor’s Office are working diligently on the logistics to make this a reality. Chief Robinson and Chief Williams endorse this system and we are hoping to bring it online by April 2010. Please be patient, as it took nearly eleven years since I first sat on a Jail Committee to get where we are now, but we are moving forward with real progress instead of just banter and rhetoric.

You may direct any questions or concerns to me via the PLEA Office, or e-mail me at fmarino@azplea.com If you have any ideas or solutions as to how to fix or improve the current process, feel free to forward them to Sergeant Keith Doherty. Keith has been instrumental in taking the bull by the horns and getting a lot of the groundwork laid to get this process off the ground. His e-mail address is keith.doherty@phoenix.gov